The Commonweal

March 23, 1951

CAN THE FRENCH WIN?

The War in Indo-China

EDWARD S. SKILLIN

MYSTIC IN THE MARKETPLACE

Simone Weil

ROBERT BARRAT

ELIZABETH BOWEN, NOVELIST

Thirty Years A-Growing

ANNE FREMANTLE

Volume LIII **15c** *Number 24*

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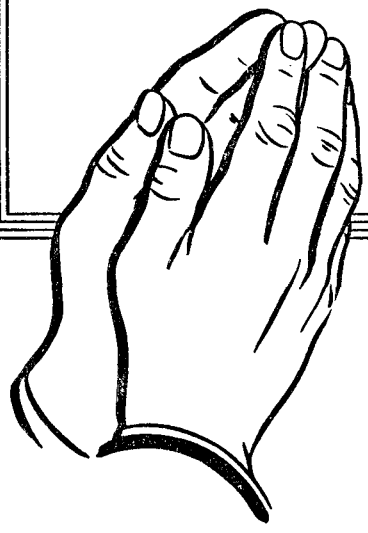
"For the Continual Prayer of a just man availeth much"

St. James 5:16



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Editor: Edward S. Skillin
Contributing Editor: Philip Burnham
Managing Editor: Edward F. Meagher
Feature Editor: John Cogley
Assistant Editor: William Pfaff

Associate Editors
John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Francis Downing
Cinema: Philip T. Hartung
Theatre: Walter Kerr

Advertising Manager: John Brubaker

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Point IV Emerges

OF ALL the documents that found their way to the Little White House at Key West, none could have proved more gratifying than the 87-page report of the President's International Development Advisory Board headed by Nelson Rockefeller. It is two years since Mr. Truman first announced the Point IV program for the underdeveloped areas of the globe, six months since the first modest Congressional appropriations. At last the mammoth project is in a coordinated, if pre-legislative, form. The hope is that it is far enough along for larger appropriations this coming fiscal year.

Naturally there is great emphasis on the relation between building up the economies of Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Oceania and our struggle against the USSR. These regions account for three-quarters of our imports of strategic materials. One object is to step up production of these materials by 50 percent.

In general the report presents our primary aim to be that of winning these impoverished peoples and their natural resources to the side of freedom. The Point IV program is frankly conceived as an adjunct to national defense.

On the other hand the Board declares that the job of eliminating malnutrition, disease, ignorance and destitution in the world is one the United States should tackle anyway. The big rise in food production projected for Southeast Asia is as much for the benefit of the peoples themselves as for world defense against Communist aggression. The report refers to the people who would benefit in such phrases as "treating their needs on the same first-things basis as our own." Again, "the problem of constructing lasting peace in the world is not one of preserving an existing order in the world but of building a new structure in which all nations can work together, exchanging their skills, labor and capital to mutual benefit."

The crux of the whole scheme would seem to be the preponderant role assigned to private investments—totaling three billions a year. How can the United States and the United Nations guarantee the principal and return on investments at a time when government expropriation and nationalization are rife? Or, at least, how can sufficient guarantees be provided to persuade American investors to double or triple their annual investments in underdeveloped foreign countries overseas? For the amount the program can accomplish as it is now envisaged will be determined by individual business men.

The report proposes incentive taxation on the part of our government, tax treaties that would remove discriminatory taxes from American corporations abroad and the underwriting of the transfer risk by the Export-Import Bank. But these are inadequate inducements.

What would seem to be called for is reciprocal and two-fold. The countries involved could give some indication that they view—and would treat—such development projects in a different manner than old-line foreign investments. American capitalists for their part would embark on these new ventures not only in order to realize a reasonable immediate return but also to bolster the peoples of the free world. Perhaps the opportunity could be so competently presented that it would become a patriotic duty for investors to put at least one percent of their income in the Point IV program. Such a proportion would assure the wherewithal.

But it is hard to conduct the discussion in economic and political terms. A decent living for a billion human beings is the prize.

Privacy and the Welfare State

STATE authorities in Tennessee and Indiana have become greatly exercised lately about "chiselers" on the public relief rolls. Both states

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have taken action which jeopardizes the annual contribution Washington makes to their welfare funds. In Indiana the State Senate provoked a storm of discussion by passing a bill permitting the press and county prosecutors' offices to examine the relief rolls. Meanwhile, in direct violation of federal law, State Senator Carl Hardin of Tennessee began to publish the names of relief recipients.

All this raises a myriad of questions. When Frederic Ozanam established the rules of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Paris in the heyday of *laissez-faire,* the members were enjoined to keep the identity of their charges secret. It is to this day recommended that each team of Vincentian visitors keep the knowledge of their ministrations from the neighbors by making their rounds after dark. It is not only that for many people there is something bitter about receiving charity, but the assumption was that to be in need was something of a disgrace. On the material level the prime object of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is to tide people over until they can stand on their own feet.

With the advent of the big depression and the gradual development of home relief, going on the public assistance rolls became somewhat different. Unemployment often befell, not scattered individuals, but great groups of families in a single locality. Aid was not so much a matter of sweet or bitter charity as a matter of justice, due the citizen. For many it ceased to involve even the slightest element of shame. Recipients of public relief came to have a status that was more and more regularized, accepted by the community; the stigma had largely gone.

Meanwhile a social security program began to be built up. Men and women began to draw benefits during periods of protracted illness, or when they were laid off, from funds to which they themselves had contributed. The same was true for those who had retired from work in old age. It became increasingly difficult for the general public to draw the line between men on straight relief and the beneficiaries of various pension funds. It seems to be getting easier all the time for the perennial recipient of straight relief to hold his head as high as anyone.

In almost any country there are plenty of adherents of the idea that "only saps work." It is little wonder the American system has produced many an individual who dodges every job for fear of endangering his own or some relative's relief status. When there are great pressures on the public funds it is also only natural to resort to weeding out men who act on the principle that whatever they do or fail to do their country owes them a living. But the identifying of relief recipients for all to see is one indication of the price to be paid if people are to enjoy all the material protection of an efficiently operating welfare state.

• NEXT WEEK •

WILLIAM A. ORTON writes a feature article for THE COMMONWEAL'S annual education issue.

"The contents of a liberal arts degree came to have, in America, about as much intrinsic coherence as those of a shopping bag; and the degree was therefore awarded on a cash-register basis, with its absurd academic arithmetic of course grades and credit hours. Chicago was one of the first to discard all this nonsense; but there are places where it still survives."

Morrison for Bevin

IT WILL be curious to note the effects on British foreign policy of the supplanting of the long-ailing Ernest Bevin by Herbert Morrison as Foreign Secretary. Mr. Attlee has been quick to announce that no change of policy will result. Both Bevin and Morrison belong to the Right Wing of the British Labor Party. One thing observers have mentioned is that, with Mr. Morrison presumably in good health, he will tend to take a more independent line than Ernest Bevin took the last twelve months. There will be less tendency for the British Foreign Secretary to drift along in complete concert with the United States.

Which man will prove to have been the more effective in negotiating with the Russians? Bevin is a farmer's son who came up through the trade union movement and was the hero of the British workers. He spoke with the knowledge that they were solidly behind him. He had an immense capacity for moral indignation. Once he had taken a stand he was almost impossible to budge. His speech was rude but he had the ability to turn the phrase that would capture the popular imagination. Because of his determination he proved to be a strong negotiator.

Herbert Morrison, on the other hand, came

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to eminence directly through politics. He is the son of a London policeman. Quick where Bevin was plodding, his touch is light where his predecessor's was ponderous. He should prove to be an entirely different kind of negotiator. He is expected to be agile, ready to maneuver, quick to seize a sudden opportunity. But for all that he may be counted on to persist in his ultimate objectives.

Of these approaches, which would seem to be more propitious for dealing with a nation which conceives of itself as an irresistible expansive force? The Russians have remained obdurate in the face of moral indignation. Perhaps they will prove a bit more responsive to a man who replies to every tactical maneuver in kind. In any event we welcome Herbert Morrison as a firm ally and companion in arms.

New Direction

AT ONE point in the Great Debate, after Herbert Hoover had expressed to a Congressional committee his opinion that it is suicidal to send ground troops to Europe and that the United States should apply instead the "ultimate remedy" of air bombardment of the Soviet Union, Republican Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey remarked that although he had heard it said that Mr. Hoover was a man who leaned toward isolationism, he now felt that Hoover was actually "the least isolationist man in the world today." To which Mr. Hoover replied: "I don't know what the definition of that term [isolationism] is, sir."

Although most Americans would, if asked, probably find it just as hard to give a definition of the term as Mr. Hoover did, it is nevertheless a fact that most of them have had a pretty good idea of what is meant by isolationism ever since the day in 1796 when George Washington asked his countrymen that famous question: "Why . . . entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?" Even as late as 1917 and 1939, substantially the same question was still being asked by a considerable number of Americans who wanted to know why the United States should get "involved in Europe's wars." The tradition of American isolationism has been a tradition of American aloofness from Europe.

Mr. Hoover's remark does not mean, of course, that this tradition has slipped his mind; it means simply that since it is now no longer Europe that is entangling us in war, since it is we who now berate the Europeans for being neutral and aloof from us in our struggle to keep Russia from expanding further, since there is no such thing as American isolationism in the modern world, there is now no longer a definition for the term "isolationism" as that term has always been understood in this country.

This fact, which the Great Debate may have settled for all time even in the minds of those Americans who have been most reluctant to join the human race, does amount to a change of direction in the course that the first President charted for American foreign policy. "It is our true policy," he said, "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." But "we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." By 1951, however, it seemed to be evident to the majority of people in this country that alliance with some portion or other of the foreign world would have to be, from now on, a permanent feature of our policy and not just a temporary expedient, because any one nation standing off by itself in the atomic age could not hope to provide for its moral and economic health, or for its physical sanity and security, with bombers and bombs alone.

It is for this reason that the important movements of postwar international politics—the formation of the United Nations and of the power blocs around the United States and the Soviet Union—have been collective in character. For some time to come the issue before mankind will be, quite obviously, whether the international formation of a world society will take the form of a democratic charter or of a totalitarian collective. And as this competition between the two systems goes on, it is safe to predict that in the non-Communist countries any institution that is suspected, rightly or wrongly, of holding beliefs that do not harmonize with democratic practice, institutions holding beliefs that appear to propagate coercion as the totalitarian system does, will come under increasingly heavy public attack. This party explains the current apprehension some people have of the political activities of Catholics, and it seems to us that in the interests of better understanding all around, in the interests of Catholic participation in a future international democracy, American Catholics would do well to demonstrate, by word and action, and to do so more convincingly than they have in recent weeks, that force is theologically repugnant to their belief in the freedom of conscience.

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Missionaries In Mufti

FATHER NICHOLAS MAESTRINI is a member of the Foreign Mission Society of Milan, which is a kind of Italian Maryknoll. For the past twenty years he has been assigned to the China mission, with headquarters in Hong Kong. He is now director of the Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong and editor of the *Sunday Examiner,* an English-language weekly, and of *Kung Kaso Po* (Catholic Herald), a Chinese publication.

Currently Father Maestrini is in the United States on a special assignment close to his heart. He is here to stimulate the lay-missionary movement among young American Catholics. Lay missionaries, Father Maestrini thinks, hold the key to further progress of the Catholic Church in the Orient. The movement is still very young over here, though there have been efforts along the same line in Europe, particularly in Holland, for a quarter century or more. At the headquarters of the Grail, Loveland, Ohio, a school of missiology to train young women was established in 1948. Some special training, Father Maestrini thinks, is essential. The would-be missionaries must have at least a basic knowledge of the language, the customs and traditions of the places they are going to.

For the ordinary volunteer there is no question of life-long dedication. "To give one's whole life," says Father Maestrini, "calls for a very special vocation. We are primarily interested in the young man or woman willing to devote a few years, usually between graduation and marriage, to taking part in the big job that has to be done before there is any hope of Christianity's flourishing in the Orient."

We Catholics have long thought of missionaries almost solely as priests and religious vowed forever to a life of exile. The dramatic departure ceremonies, the aura around missionaries in childhood, the rich rhetoric dedicated to our distant heroes and martyrs, all these things undoubtedly shaped our somewhat romantic notions. But with modern communications and the shrinkage of distance, notions are changing somewhat. At a time when the far-flung GI is a commonplace character, the lay-missionary movement stands a better chance of being accepted.

The lay missionaries Father Maestrini has in mind would not be merely helpers to the priest or nuns already in the field. He does not conceive of their role in sacristan or catechist terms. Father Maestrini thinks the job to be done is *essentially* one for laymen. Priests and religious cannot do it.

The volunteer lay missionaries (not the happiest name for these particular people) are really to be a kind of necessary link between the Church and those who will in time lay the basis for an Oriental christendom. The real work has to be done by native Christian leaders. They will have to translate the truths of Catholicism into acceptable Oriental terms and build the foundations for a new Christian culture at once truly Christian and truly Oriental. "It is a job," says Father Maestrini, "for teams—teams of scholars, artists, philosophers, theologians. Single individuals working alone can't do it."

The priest explained the immediate need for trained lay missionaries from the West. "The average convert in the Orient first comes in contact with Catholicism through priests or nuns. He has to see how his religion is applied to the life of the ordinary layman like himself. We cannot let him think of Catholicism solely in terms of the religious life. He needs the example laymen can give. This will take native lay leaders. To get these native leaders we are asking for young people from Europe and America to come and help—to show our potential leaders how to apply Christianity to their workaday lives. We are not asking for preachers of the word —we have them—but for those willing and able to give concrete example."

There should never be any question of "Westernizing" existing customs, traditions or habits of thought. "China, for instance, has no Christian tradition. But it does have very noble traditions and venerable institutions. If Christianity is to come to China, it has to permeate what is there already." Christian piety expressed in Oriental customs, for instance. Christian thought translated into terms of Oriental philosophy and Oriental ways of thinking. What Thomas Aquinas did for the rational thought of Aristotle, the Christian leaders of the future have to do for the venerable sages of Oriental thought. A Christian art in the Orient cannot be a foreign art imported from another world and another age. Even the liturgy should be adapted to local needs—and Father Maestrini thinks it will be, in time. The Latin language, utterly foreign to the Oriental, presents great difficulties.

"In the Orient," Father Maestrini says, "the great challenge the Church faces is to baptize whatever is good or true or beautiful—and there is much to work on."

In the meantime, the employment of lay missionaries from the West, willing to set aside all national or racial prejudice, is essential.

"It is a delicate task," Father Maestrini explains. "If anyone is to be successful as a missionary, he has to identify himself as far as possible with the people to whom he has been sent. Their needs must be his needs. Their hardships, his hardships. Their ways, his ways. In the Orient today the missionary above all must do everything he can to dissociate the religion of the West from the long hated colonialism of the West. He has to refuse the privileges that go with being from the wealthy West and accept the burden of the natives as much as possible. He has to cease being an Italian, an American, a Frenchman or whatever he is, to be above all a Christian. He has to show that Catholicism is supra-national, supernatural. No easy job. The lay missionary must be more ready to serve than to lead, extremely anxious to inspire but utterly loath to impose.

"The whole job is tremendous, enough to challenge the imagination of anyone. The lay-missionary movement is only a small beginning—but a sound one."

JOHN COGLEY.

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The War in Indo-China

Is there a sound basis for Washington's optimism about the way things are going there?

By EDWARD S. SKILLIN

FROM all that one can gather, the belief is growing that in the past six months the outlook for Indo-China has completely changed. For reasons which will follow, there is confidence in Washington that the French, and their native puppet, Bao Dai, are strong enough now to turn back Ho Chi Minh and his Indo-Chinese Communists. And since Indo-China is the strategic key to continental Southeast Asia, that critical area, which is a major source of rubber, tin and other vital raw materials, is safe.

The reasons for this supposed change of prospect are several. The new French commander, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, has "revitalized the whole defense force and defense strategy." His army of 150,000 men boasts a new morale and a new effectiveness. It is better equipped. The United States has supplied armored vehicles, napalm bombs and more than a hundred planes. We also have promised to equip some 15,000 of Bao Dai's native troops. A more vigorous command and better equipment have produced a marked change in the balance of forces in embattled Indo-China.

In any case, when Ho Chi Minh's forces, after weeks of careful preparation, attacked Hanoi in force at the turn of the year, they suffered a rude repulse, according to French reports. The French claimed a major victory, one so decisive that they doubt whether Ho Chi Minh can mount another major attack before the spring rains make such operations impossible.

As the French and loyal native forces will be even better equipped next year, in large part thanks to further arms consignments from the United States, to dislodge them will become increasingly difficult. The *Christian Science Monitor* quotes Donald Heath, American minister to Indo-China, to the effect that the defense forces there are "undoubtedly able to manage any fresh offensive which the internal Communist forces could muster." Mr. Heath even thinks so highly of General de Lattre's army that he is willing to predict a successful defense if Indo-China should be invaded by 185,000 Chinese Communists.

That leads to one of the most compelling reasons for present optimism in Washington in regard to Southeast Asia—the present course of the Korean War. The punishment which UN troops are consistently inflicting on the Chinese Communists is said to be knocking out their crack armies, killing off their best men and using up their limited supplies of first-rate equipment. One effect of the mauling which the Mao troops are undergoing in Korea is that guerrilla activity is on the increase on the Chinese mainland. The reports of this are very vague and undocumented. But it is in South China, near the Indo-Chinese border, the proposed take-off for the invasion southward, that the anti-Communist guerrillas are supposed to be most active. The Chinese invasion forces, the theory goes, already have their hands full simply maintaining local order.

And so from all directions come reports that the French position in Indo-China has tremendously improved since last September. To balance the conclusion that all is well there are certain disquieting considerations. Chief of these is the realization that the French are on the wrong side of the great colonial revolt. The peoples of Asia are universally opposed to them. Their native emperor, Bao Dai, has been refused recognition by such new nations as India, the Philippines and Indonesia. Within Indo-China itself, no matter how strong the French forces become, they must perforce be fighting a losing battle against aroused native aspirations.

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BEFORE turning to a description of the various political groupings among the peoples of Indo-China, it would be well to assess the French military position after the "great victory" of three months ago. In the daytime the forces of Ho Chi Minh control 70 per cent of the geographical area of Indo-China; but by nightfall the French authorities' control shrinks to about 5 per cent of the whole area. It is not safe to venture abroad outside of certain cities and military posts. And although the French army is supposed to be considerably stronger, it has been able to reoccupy only a handful of very minor military posts it recently abandoned.

There are about twenty million people in Indo-China. In the north, where the population is densest, there is an important neutral zone inhabited by a million and a half people, who in

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turn influence politically almost an equal number. Their viewpoint represents that of the great majority of the people of Indo-China — they seek political independence above everything.

Those who bet on Bao Dai as the most likely means of obtaining this independence are perhaps one in ten for all of Indo-China. Those who bank on Ho Chi Minh and the Indo-Chinese Communists would represent not more than five percent. All the rest simply want their political independence.

In the large areas controlled by Ho Chi Minh the government is nominally that of a republic. Men of all political views hold lesser positions in the army and the government, but all those in key posts, all those with any real authority, are Ho Chi Minh's subordinates. So that while the great bulk of his following does not give him whole-souled support, he is able to control the greater part of Indo-China.

Of the twenty millions in the country some million and three-quarters are Catholics. The highest proportion is in the densely populated areas of the north. The Church in Indo-China is 350 years old; there are five native (and 9 foreign) bishops and 1,600 native Catholic priests, as well as some 200 foreign missionaries. During the war these Catholics took a large part in the Resistance Movement and today they constitute perhaps one fifth of the people in the above-mentioned neutral zone, which lies south of the city of Hanoi and along the Red River delta. Bishops and people of Bui-Chu and Phat-Diem are the strongest advocates of independence.

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THE French have had control of Indo-China for less than a hundred years. Up until then the people were independent. They regained a large part of this independence for a period of about a year after Japan had been defeated. There was *de facto* recognition for the Viet-Minh Resistance regime headed but not completely controlled by Ho Chi Minh. This definitively came to an end in December, 1946, when the present hostilities began.

During the decades in which they administered the Indo-Chinese colony the French accomplished something in the way of education and public health. Yet just before the war some three-fifths of the non-military budget went for government payroll. As far as political tutelage goes, the French permitted the election (not by universal suffrage) of certain local consultative assemblies. These included both French colonial officials and natives and they were restricted in their dealings to certain economic and financial matters. But on the basis of their long background of independence and the strength of current national sentiments, the people of Indo-China believe that they are ready to resume self-rule.

The aim on which all native groups agree is that of political independence, a new relationship with France which would continue certain cultural and economic ties. Obviously with rival armies in the field, this independence could not be proclaimed tomorrow. Ho Chi Minh himself has been intransigent in demanding total independence. But most of the people of Indo-China would find a dominion status acceptable for the period of transition. This runs directly counter to the French program which assigned Indo-China a place in the French Union of such a character that the "mother country" would continue to have military, diplomatic, economic and, indeed, general direction over Indo-China.

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THE choice here presents a striking contrast to that which we confront in China. Here one does not have to decide either for the Communists or for a regime which has largely lost favor with the great bulk of the population. For Indo-China has a real independence movement which can be developed from the nucleus provided by the above-mentioned neutral zone. Moreover, the land problem here is not similar to China's. The land is so densely populated, particularly in the north, that it is parceled out into numerous small holdings; in some instances village communes own the land. In any case, despite the large properties which still exist in the sparsely populated south, Ho Chi Minh has not sought to pose as an agrarian reformer. He has fought the French primarily as a nationalist.

Therefore the granting of independence and of the unity of the three regions into which the French divided the country, would deprive the Indo-Chinese Communists of their chief talking point. And if a consistent effort were made to build up the defenses of the neutral zone, which now consist principally of 3,200 outmoded rifles, these people would be able to defend themselvs from Communist attack. With a guarantee of a dominion status they would even be willing to fight alongside the French—as the South Koreans have done with the UN forces.

At the moment the situation in this neutral zone is highly precarious. Despite their lack of weapons, these people have been able to defend their land against Ho Chi Minh, who has been busy elsewhere. But if he should decide at any moment to attack, they have not the power to wtihstand him. If he should, then, succeed in absorbing this neutral zone, a nucleus around which to organize a stable and independent Indo-China would have disappeared.

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WHEN one considers the costly nature of the French efforts to hold on to their colony of Indo-China, one wonders why they keep at it. The present cost of conducting the defenses of these scattered outposts of empire is about half a billion dollars a year. The sizable revenue which that colony once earned for the mother country has become a frightful deficit. It is said that some eight to ten regular French divisions are tied down in Indo-China and that de Lattre seeks 30,000 more men, one-third Africans. One explanation is that the political parties which were responsible for the disastrous French attempt to regain their productive colony cannot admit to the electorate that they were mistaken. But be that as it may, only the French Communists are making political hay of the situation. A few Socialists have spoken timidly about UN assistance with the problem of Indo-China, but that is all. No doubt national pride is heavily involved and, as part of it, the ancient French colonial complex.

Under the circumstances it would seem that the United States could be more insistent that some of the arms we are furnishing go directly to the non-Communist independents, whose continued neutrality depends solely on the whims of Ho Chi Minh. This would be done not only to protect the population of the neutral zone but as a start toward organizing a national army to defend the whole country. It would mean the dispatch of technicians as well. (Up to now the French have decreed that all technicians there should be French technicians so long as any were available.) The Indo-Chinese believe that the creation of a national army would be a powerful means of establishing popular confidence.

Once something is done for immediate defense, a program of transition should be set up under United Nations auspices. Ideally, the French would agree to withdraw their forces gradually as the new national army gained control. Elections would then be held under UN auspices and little by little full political independence would be achieved.

Would an independent Indo-China be able to defend herself against invasion from the north? Hardly by herself. But whereas under the present set-up Mao's Chinese forces would march in as liberators from Western domination, they would brand themselves as aggressors if they were to defy the United Nations in Indo-China. The Indo-Chinese independents are eager to defend themselves today and ask only adequate weapons. For the long pull an independent Indo-China would have to rely on the principle of collective security to protect her. But in view of the universal demand and the poor prospects for the present French policy, independence would seem to provide the only feasible solution.

FROM FRANCE

Simone Weil

IN A VERY few years Simone Weil has reached the heights of literary fame. It is posthumous fame, unhappily, for Simone Weil died in London in 1943. In the past two years four books about her have been published in rapid succession and she has reminded people of the great Pascal.

It is indeed Pascal of whom one thinks on reading the remarkable collection of her thoughts edited by Gustave Thibon. It is a sort of spiritual diary in which Simone Weil put down day by day her meditations on nature and the supernatural, religion, social life, philosophy, etc. Sentences with the rigor of a mathematical theorem, with a conciseness and a force that come from being incomplete, produce a sort of blinding beauty.

"The supreme greatness of Christianity derives from the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy against suffering but a supernatural use of suffering."

And this: "Adam and Eve sought to find divinity in vital energy. A tree, a fruit. But divinity was prepared for us on some dead wood, geometrically squared, from which hangs a dead body. The secret of our relationship to God must be sought in our mortality."

Everyone who has opened these volumes has been struck by the authenticity, the violence, the implacable character of Simone Weil's genius. A doubt has arisen, nevertheless, about the quality of her Christianity; some people find her a true Christian mystic, others a Jansenist or Catharist heretic.

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BEFORE I express my opinion on the question, I think it would be useful to say who Simone Weil was and under what circumstances her notebooks were written. She was born in 1909 of a bourgeois family—Jewish but unbelieving, as far as I know. When she was very young she manifested extraordinary intellectual precociousness, as did her brother, who became a doctor. She was a pupil of Alain, the old radical philosopher, and it was at his feet that her predilection for abstract thought and philosophy greatly deepened.

Simone Weil went to the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where she got her degree in philosophy, after a brilliant scholastic career. She became a teacher. She wanted to bring her ideas to life and put them into practice: she became a militant of the extreme Left without belonging to any political party. She went much further. For a year, in order to share the lot of the humble and know their wretchedness from inside, she became a worker in the Renault automobile factory and lived in a miserable hotel room.

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It was there, when physical strength permitted it, that she began to put on paper her meditations on the condition of man, his suffering, his destiny and the direction of that destiny. When war broke out in Spain such a woman could only espouse the cause of the people, which was about to be crushed by the Francoist reaction. She went to Spain and joined the Loyalists, not to fight, but to minister, to aid, to exhort.

She was extremely awkward physically (being small, ugly and having features almost like a Goebbel's caricature of a Jew) and when she severely burned herself with lye she returned to France. Then came the World War, and having taken refuge in the south she found shelter for several months on Gustave Thibon's farm. In spite of frightful headaches she forced herself to work as hard as the farm laborers and sent her ration tickets to friends who were interned. She came to the United States in May, 1942, and sought to recruit forces for the Resistance. She left for London in November, 1942.

★

SUCH is her life in its tragic brevity. It would be beautiful enough in itself, that of a woman dying at the age of thirty-four out of love for others. But as I have already said, there is the additional fact that she had genius. There were philosophical problems that she conquered in two strokes of a pen. She refuted the pessimism of a Schopenhauer or a Sartre absolutely: "To say that the world has no value, that this life has no value, and to give the existence of evil as proof is absurd, for if life has no value how can evil deprive it of anything?"

Simone Weil was also a true mystic, and the accent in her books recalls the mysticism of Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross. As with those two great Spaniards her motto could have been: *"Todo y Nada"* (All and Nothing). Everything that she teaches in the spiritual doctrine scattered through her writings is that if we wish to attain the all, God, we must reduce ourselves to nothing.

And as Gustave Thibon wrote: "To kill the self, a man must expose himself naked and without defenses to all the pains of life, accept the void and injustice, never seek compensation for misfortune, and above all forego the play of the imagination, 'which perpetually tends to open fissures through which grace would escape.' All sins are attempts to flee the void. It is also necessary to renounce the past and the future, for the self is nothing else but a concrete accumulation of the past and the future around a present which is never satisfying. Memory, hope, counteract the salutary effects of suffering by opening up an unlimited area to an exulting of the imagination (I was, I shall be . . .), but fidelity to the present moment truly reduces man to nothingness and opens for him the doorways to eternity."

★

CAN Simone Weil be called a Christian mystic? One point is that she was never baptized, she even refused baptism. But that can be explained by the vocation which she believed to be hers, to bear witness to Christ from outside the Church, to be "at the intersection between Christianity and everything which is not Christian."

One thing is certain, she speaks wonderfully of the love of God. Father Perrin, the Dominican whom she saw during her year's stay in Marseilles before leaving for the United States, a priest who instructed her, says in the preface of *Attente de Dieu* that she never missed Mass on Sundays and "loved to pray in the light of the Sacred Host. . . . She adhered with all her soul to the faith of the Church regarding the mystery of the Eucharist and even savored it experientially." In a letter that she wrote him, she declared, after having been present at an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: "My heart was transported, for always, I hope, into the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar."

And then there is another letter which tells of an authentic religious experience, it seems, and brings us in contact with premises for the essence of a conversion. She is telling how for a long time the very word God had no place in her thoughts: "I would have none of it until one day three and a half years ago I was unable to refuse it at a moment of great physical anguish. Then I was compelled to love without being able to give a name to that love. I experienced without being in any way prepared for it (for I had never read the mystics) a presence more personal, more real than that of a human being, inaccessible and analogous to the love which shines through the tenderest smile of a beloved. *From that instant the name of God and that of Christ were mingled more and more irresistibly in my thoughts.*"

★

ISN'T that enough to indicate in Simone Weil a soul quite close to baptism, a neophyte on the threshold of the Church? But, still, things are not so simple. If she had grasped and lived some of the essential mysteries of Christianity, others remained obstinately hidden from her. And far from seeing in her spiritual course a progress toward Christianity, certain people declare that on the contrary, if there was progress, it was toward heresy. The well-documented article of M Marcel Moré in one of the recent numbers of that excellent review, *Dieu Vivant,* says: "What is striking today in reading *l'Attente de Dieu* is that in 1942, in adopting a pseudo-Catholicism which could not deceive any theologian, she exposed for good and for evil a theology o Catharist tendencies, heavily impregnated with Pythagorism, Platonism and Spinozaism, and, what is more one which plunged deep roots into Oriental traditions.'

I admit that M. Moré's argument carries conviction He presents Simone Weil as a proud intellectual foreve seeking rational certainties and refusing to accept th humble, groping pathways to the Faith. She had a esoteric conception of the Sacraments, writing that "onl those who are above a certain level of spirituality ca have a part in the Sacraments as such."

She had a veritable hatred for the social body, th rude beast as she called it. Two histories she rejecte

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violently, that of the Jewish people and that of the Romans, both of whom, in their frenzy to dominate and their haste to rule the world, were the executioners of populations and the civilizations which preceded them. To the extent that the Catholic Church is the heir both of Jerusalem and Rome, to the extent to which she is a powerful social institution, Simone Weil felt for her a violent hatred.

It must be admitted that it is difficult, to say the least, to dissociate Christianity, as she did, from the Catholic Church. She recognized Christ, but on condition of being able to remain outside the Roman Church.

And finally, is not Marcel Moré right in seeing in her dangerous tendencies toward religious syncretism; for her, all religions contain good and are placed on the same footing. There are disturbing phrases of hers which might well induce error in uninformed readers: "Christianity must contain within itself all vocations without exception since it is catholic. Consequently the Church as well. But in my eyes Christianity is catholic and yet it is not, in fact. So many things are outside it, so many things that I love and that I do not wish to give up." And in her enumeration she includes: "All the traditions accused of heresy, such as the Manichean and Albigensian tradition."

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SUCH formulas in the work of Simone Weil hardly place her in the pure light of Christian orthodoxy. Nevertheless, I persist in believing that if she had lived, considering the long road that she had already traversed alone, Simone Weil would have continued to advance in her progressive discovery of the mysteries of Christ and His Church. Let us not forget that she died at the age of thirty-four, that the texts which we are now analyzing were often but fragments, notes, hypotheses, that she planned to revise later. In certain of these writings we find several gaps, paragraphs which are almost contradictory—two steps of a process of thought that she would perhaps later have brought together in a synthesis which would be more satisfying for minds devoted to the truth.

It seems right, then, to recognize in Simone Weil an authentic spiritual writer whose direction can be considered as essentially Christian. When so many philosophical systems have the effect on us of unreal juggling, when so many treatises of Christian spirituality give off the stale odor of dissolving sweets, it is a tonic for us to plunge into the discovery of a course inspired by a savage quest for truth and an ardent thirst for God.

Simone Weil will put many unbelievers and agnostics on the road to Christ and His Church. Her writings, the example of her life, will be salutary for many lukewarm Catholics who have forgotten that the practice of the Beatitudes is the ABC of Christian life. It is impossible to be in her company for long without being seized by a tremendous desire for interior purification in prayer, voluntary poverty, self-denial, commitment and participation in the suffering of workers, prisoners and slaves.

ROBERT BARRAT.

SO THEY TELL ME

Labor and the Boys in Korea

THE position of the labor unions is once more beginning to be treated with the acid of false patriotism. The question of what labor wants and why it wants it is cavalierly referred to the boys in Korea. "Do the soldiers in Korea," David Lawrence tearfully asks, "approve of any group which deliberately boycotts the defense operation and refuses to aid it after having been so requested by the President of the United States?" This is manifest nonsense.

I don't know what the soldiers in Korea approve—except peace—and neither does Mr. Lawrence. What he is doing is asking a rhetorical question as if it made sense and was a meaningful frame of reference to which difficulty could be appealed. Moreover, the question is a fact-begging question. In the form in which it is asked it is false—loaded, as they say of polls—and, therefore, invites, indeed commands, a false answer. It is not true that labor "boycotts the defense operation and refuses to aid it." It is not true even to Mr. Truman who regards the withdrawal as not "serious."

The test of whether labor is aiding the defense operation or not is a single test and a simple one. Is labor producing goods? The answer to that is yes. I didn't notice any castigation by Mr. Lawrence of the textile industry when it refused to take government contracts save on its own financial terms. There is a gray market in steel. Raw cotton is stabilized at 40 per cent above its June price. He didn't submit those difficulties to the boys in Korea. He never mentioned them at all. If we are going to have a soldier parliament let us appeal all of our difficulties, and not just those which suit our bias.

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ONE may properly say that the statement of the United Labor Policy Committee partakes of the nature of our economy—that it is inflationary. Its vocabulary is not necessarily to be excused on that account. But it can be understood as a verbal measure of the character and depth of labor's anger. All men who are angry, whose anger reflects their impotence, express themselves fiercely. How they have said a thing is less important than *what* they have said.

The essence of labor's grievance is this: "At a time when fixed formulas are being applied to wages business is being allowed to write its own ceiling prices. Wages are frozen. Nothing else in the economy has been frozen." That is the heart of the matter. Other issues lie close to the heart, but it is this that pumps the blood.

It is this malignant thing against which labor is protesting. Were its protest heard, its cause removed, labor

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would not only be satisfied; it would have made a benignant contribution to the vigor and value and the steadfastness of America's life. If we are going to make rhetorical bets about what the boys in Korea approve, they could hardly disapprove that contribution, as they can hardly approve the inflationary pressures which surround us. For if Mr. Eric Johnston be right, inflation is at least as great a peril as is Communism.

★

IN THIS time of such economic crisis the tax structure is talked about but remains unchanged. No real price controls are in effect. Farm legislation is neither decried nor touched. The farmers are protected; we pay their agricultural tariff in the form of taxes. No one that I know of, including David Lawrence, blows patriotic reveille for them, suggesting that they are unpatriotically asleep or rioting in the corn.

General Motors Corporation continues to astound the world by its profits, which, for 1950, were $834,044,039. Yet in 1951 an office supposedly in charge of Price Stabilization allows General Motors, and all the other auto companies, to raise prices by 3½ per cent. Mr. Lawrence does not get exercised about that.

Instead he accuses labor of trying to dictate the operation of the defense program, and writes a defense of Mr. Charles Wilson.

One need not accept the proposition of the CIO's Mr. Allan S. Haywood that what labor is resisting is Mr. Wilson's "dictatorship," or impute to Mr. Wilson a lack of patriotism, to discover that Mr. Wilson is acting peculiarly. It has, until very recently, been the contention of Mr. Wilson that a business man is disinfected of his business prejudices when he goes to work for the government, but that no disinfection takes place in the case of a labor leader. This, surely, is a curious point of view. From Mr. Wilson's chief assistants, former General Clay and Mr. Sidney Weinberg, labor has had no evidence of total purity. The fact is, too, that Mr. Wilson made no offer at the outset to give labor the representation to which it believes it is entitled. To put it quietly that failure indicated neither tact nor good judgment.

At the time this article is being written Mr. Wilson, fresh from a visit to Key West, told the press: "I'm damned if I know what they [the labor people] want." If this is true Mr. Wilson betrays an unwonted psychological deafness. For labor has made its demands very clear. They are these: a new board that will decide labor disputes as well as wage policies. A regular quarterly increase in wages to close the wage-price spread. Special consideration for low wage unions and the removal of the ceiling over "fringe" benefits.

One may—Mr. Wilson may—disagree with and reject one or all of the demands. He may put them, so to speak, in the area of bargaining or negotiation. But he cannot expect men to take him seriously when he says that what labor wants eludes him.

He knows very well, as a former executive of General Electric who dealt with labor unions, that what labor wants is a real, meaningful assault on inflation. He knows very well that what labor wants is equality of sacrifice which is made honest, real, apparent. If labor had been given such evidence, from the outset, that these things were even being striven for, the whole present difficulty would never have been called into existence.

There remains, of course, the question of manpower. The facts about this exacerbated issue are in dispute. It is, I am told, the conviction of Mr. Wilson that Secretary of Labor Tobin wanted to control the allocation of civilian manpower. To prevent this he made Mr. Arthur Flemming his manpower assistant. Whatever Mr. Wilson's motivation, Flemming, and not Tobin, will control civilian manpower.

About this appointment labor has, however, validly grave fear. Since Mr. Flemming will report to General Clay, the labor leaders are afraid that, in the event of large-scale war, labor will be drafted. During World War II General Clay argued in support of a "work or fight" law. Such is the basis of the fear. Mr. Wilson's disclaimer of a labor draft has neither quieted labor's fears nor given its leaders any comfort.

Our labor movement has freed itself, with strife and difficulty, of Communist influences. It is as free and as responsible a labor movement as exists in the world. Its more than merely rhetorical experience with Communists makes it more extraordinarily aware than are most of us of the meaning of any struggle we would engage in with Communism.

★

OUR labor movement is, in the words of Selig Perlman, "the leader of the free trade unions of the world as well as the enduring hope of American liberalism as such." Quite properly it is almost arrogantly proud of its meaning and its place in the maintenance and forwarding of freedom in the world. There are things it does not need to be told by anyone. Like a little girl who was weak and who by force of her great spirit has won strength, our labor movement knows the value and the meaning of health.

It has made mistakes. Though I do not think so, it may in minor parts of the present rebellion—in ways, perhaps, not in conclusions—be wrong now. But it is convinced that great values are being diminished, that wrong is being done to it and to the whole people. Justifying its withdrawal the statement it made says, "in no other way can we effectively impress upon the American people the great wrongs being perpetrated against them."

But it cannot be treated either by Mr. Truman or Mr. Wilson as if it were a screaming and recalcitrant child crying "with no language save a cry." Too much is involved for either of them in the strange words of David Lawrence, to proceed in the aloof belief that "nature must take its course." I had thought we were long past that unscientific nonsense. Mr. Wilson is now a voluntary servant in our government. Mr. Truman has obligations because he is still the President of the United States.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

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The Stage

MARY ROSE

I AM NOT one who holds himself impervious to either the charm or the whimsy of the late James M. Barrie, but "Mary Rose" has always seemed to me one of the feeblest and most maddening of his plays, and I am afraid it does still. Helen Hayes, in association with ANTA, has given it a loving production, and an exceptionally able cast goes about its business with a quiet confidence which does everything possible to conceal the essential emptiness of the play, but we must finally come to the last scene and be faced with the fact that this is a random, rather than a coherent, ghost story.

Mary Rose is a girl who has a bad habit of disappearing from time to time. When her hand is asked in marriage, her perturbed parents feel that they must communicate her odd disability to the young man. He is puzzled, as who would not be, but remains willing, and he and Mary Rose have three or four years of happy marriage, and one child, before she hears the conventional music in her ears and is off again. This time she is AWOL for twenty-five years, and it is a strain on everybody when she reappears looking not a day older. She is also considerably upset because she cannot take her baby on her lap, said baby having long since rebelled at his father's neglect and popped off to Australia. Everyone now dies — I *think* everyone dies; the play skips back and forth in time a good bit—but the ghost of Mary Rose continues to wander about the abandoned homestead looking for her baby. The baby, in an army uniform, turns up, takes mama on *his* lap, and she is at last free to go out the window and up into the stars.

Just why we should feel any sympathy for Mary Rose's predicament, even in this tender production, continues to escape me; and just why she should place so much value on her son—as against, say, her husband, who is readily available on her return, though equipped with a new mustache—is equally unexplained. The entire venture, for all its quiet domestic flavor and comparative realism, bears a substantial resemblance to "The Castle of Otranto" and that entire Gothic school which was satisfied so long as it had a ghost, sequitur or non-sequitur. We may be spared the clanking of chains, but we are still without any narrative logic.

Barrie padded out his play with several charming, if irrelevant, scenes of light comedy, and he also incorporated, at some length, an affectionate study of Scotch integrity and intransigence; Oliver Thorndike gives what is probably the best performance in the part. Bethal Leslie is both attractive and skilful as Mary Rose, though I did not find her finally touching; however, the emotions she is called upon to express are so without reasonable motivation that it would no doubt be unfair to hold her responsible. (*At the* ANTA *Playhouse*)

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

LIFE WITH MOTHER

IT IS interesting that two major films are turning up at the same time in which the villain, if any, is mama. I don't think this is due to the movies' discovering psychology in a big way or to a sudden realization of the importance of the mother role in the development of the hero's characterization, so let's not call this a trend yet. If mama continues to be the heavy in future films we may feel justified in considering the meaning behind the mother-cycle; but for the present let's just look at these two well-made pictures.

Without having any of the elements of a thriller, *"Fourteen Hours"* is one of the most thrilling movies we've seen in a long time. For almost its entire running-time, its central character, one Robert Cosick, is perched on the ledge of a hotel fifteen stories above the spell-bound crowd on the street. The cop on the beat rushes up to Robert's room and tries to persuade him to come in. The young man's mother arrives, his father, his girl friend, a couple of psychiatrists, several squads of policemen and various other people all anxious to help. But that first cop, wonderfully played by Paul Douglas with a fatherly friendliness, is the only one who really establishes contact with Robert, the only one with whom Robert will talk freely.

Audiences who see this film will recognize certain similarities to events that actually took place in New York several years ago. Little by little, we learn from what Robert says, from what his mother says as she leans out of the window ("I love you, Robert; don't do this to me"), and as she talks to reporters, from what the meek, beaten father says, from the pleas of Robert's girl friend, and from the many conversations between Robert and the cop who finally tells him off and gives him the rough scolding he should have got years ago from his father.

But in the meantime, Robert, the exhibitionist, the neurotic who feels guilty about hating his father, decides that he can't come in because the crowd below is waiting for him to jump. And the camera that has gone into the street many times to examine this crowd misses no opportunity to portray the people's morbid fascination. Although the incidents and minor sub-plots that take place among these people (the young couple who fall in love, the married couple who decide against a divorce, the taxi drivers who make a betting pool) are theatrical devices, they serve a legitimate purpose by taking us away for a while at least from the tense and too gruelling action in the hotel room and on the ledge. Because the camera work and acting are so good throughout the film, the realism is heightened. Outstanding portrayals are turned in by Mr. Douglas as the big-hearted cop, Richard Basehart as Robert, Agnes Moorehead as the mother who took out all her resentment against her hus-

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band, and Robert Keith as this defeated man.

You may wonder, when the film's end leaves you limp, just what "Fourteen Hours" is trying to say; but actually its message is clear: the suffering Robert underwent, through years of listening to his bickering parents and then siding with his mother after the divorce, culminates in his belief that he is a failure like his father in "life's rat race." When Robert asks the friendly cop for ten good reasons for staying alive, your pity for the young man is overwhelming and you strive like everything to give him the answers. Indeed, "Fourteen Hours" does more than dish up thrills.

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THE story of the young man in *"Teresa"* is similar in many ways to that of the man on the ledge, except for one big difference: his parents did not get a divorce; his dominating mother and his weak father stayed together and continued to live in their tenement-like apartment in Brooklyn; this young man's main problem is to cut the silver cord and to stand on his own feet in a world in which his father never made him feel safe. Fred Zinnemann has directed much of "Teresa" as if it were a documentary film, a psychological case history of a boy who returned from the war and was always running. The cast with several newcomers and relatively unknown movie actors help to give the film an air of reality which is also aided by good, on-the-spot photography. The picture's greatest failing is in its editing which is often so confused that one cannot tell where a flashback begins and ends.

These flashbacks are important, because through them we get the story of what happened to this young man in Italy. His fear of fighting was somewhat relieved by a friendly sergeant, but his failure on a mission caused the death of this sergeant. Later the young man falls in love with a very attractive Italian girl; and in marriage he finds great happiness. But back in Brooklyn, the boy's mother comes between her immature son and Teresa, his bride. It is Teresa who finally helps the boy to grow up, and the film closes on a hopeful note with our young man taking his first steps toward independence.

In spite of its many flaws and the clinical aspect of the script written by Stewart Stern (from a story by Stern and Alfred Hayes) "Teresa" is an interesting and intelligent picture. Italian Pier Angeli is lovely to look at and extremely moving in the title role. John Ericson as her husband has a much more difficult role; he's convincing enough when he is portraying weakness, but on the whole his performance has a static quality that may be due more to the role than his ability as an actor. Patricia Collinge is excellent as the mother: soft, persistent, tenacious and almost victorious in her hold on her son. Richard Bishop is effective as the weak father who finally crashes through when his son really needs him. But after all this is Mother's Day; and sometimes a boy's best friend is Philip Wylie.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Communications

Civil Liberty and the Moral Law

Dubuque, Iowa

TO the Editors: The COMMONWEAL (March 2) took issue with an editorial which I wrote for *The Witness* [Dubuque, Iowa] on the subject, "Fallacy over 'The Miracle'." The writer of the editorial quoted my statement, "The Constitution does not guarantee anybody any right to do what is wrong. Freedom does not mean man has the right to do what is wrong. Freedom does not mean a man has the right to poison his fellowmen, nor does it mean he has the right to poison his mind." THE COMMONWEAL writer implied that I should have made a "further distinction between the Thomistic notion of the moral freedom of the individual and the civil liberty guaranteed by the Constitution" and he said that my statement was an oversimplification of the problem. . . .

First, I should like to make it clear that I was not then, nor am I now, concerned with what THE COMMONWEAL author calls the whoopdedoo over "The Miracle." That is to say, I am not defending or denouncing the methods which were employed to ban the film. I am only concerned with a principle which thirty-nine non-Catholic ministers invoked in protesting the ban on the motion picture.

They said in their statement, according to a Religious News Service dispatch, that "the right of a person to decide for himself whether or not he wishes to view any particular film, whether it is good or bad, religious or sacrilegious, is guaranteed by the American Constitution."

It was that statement that aroused my editorial ire, for that I maintained, and do here maintain, is a fallacy. I did not say then, nor do I say here, that "The Miracle" is sacrilegious. The statement by the non-Catholic ministers argues that the civil law *guarantees the citizen the right* to participate in the violation of the moral law, since they said the U. S. Constitution *guarantees the right* to see a bad or sacrilegious film.

There should be no question, then, that here we are dealing with a violation of the moral law. The ministers themselves specifically cite that which is "bad" or "sacrilegious." A sacrilege, of course, is a violation of the moral law, a sin against religion. And one who promotes or cooperates with a sacrilegious act participates to a degree in violating the moral law.

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THE question under discussion resolves itself to this: Is it within the scope or power of the civil law to guarantee to citizens the *right* to violate the moral law? It is not a matter of distinguishing between the moral freedom of the individual and civil liberty; it is rather

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the profound and currently significant matter of the relation of civil liberty to the moral law.

The Catholic position has been clearly and succinctly stated by Pope Leo XIII. In his encyclical on "Human Liberty" (*Libertas Humana*), we read that the freedom of the individual and the liberty which he enjoys as a member of society are both subject to the eternal law of God.

Pope Leo wrote, "it is manifest that the eternal law of God is the sole standard and rule of human liberty, not only in each individual man, but also in the community and civil society which men constitute when united." This holds true whether we consider those civil laws which deal with what is good or bad by its very nature or those particular rules of life, suggested by reason and prudence, binding all citizens to work together for the attainment of the common end proposed to the community.

Leo emphasized that "the nature of human liberty, however it be considered, whether in individuals or in society, whether in those who command or in those who obey, supposes the necessity of obedience to some supreme and eternal law, which is no other than the authority of God, commanding good and forbidding evil." It is difficult to see, therefore, that a distinction should be made between the freedom of the individual and the civil liberty guaranteed by the Constitution when we are on the grounds of the moral law.

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LEO condemned the doctrine of Liberalism whose followers "deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due, and proclaim that every man is a law to himself; from which arises the ethical system which they style independent morality, and which, under the guise of liberty, exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God, and substitutes a boundless license."

Jacques Maritain in *Some Reflections on Culture and Liberty,* (University of Chicago Press) disagrees with a commonly held notion of civil liberty, which makes freedom of choice an end in itself. According to Maritain's political philosophy, civil society has as its essential purpose not the freedom of choice of each individual, but the common temporal good. Moral as well as material, this common temporal good embraces in itself a principal element—"the develpment of conditions of the environment which will help the multitude attain a degree of intellectual and moral life." As a result of this each person will be in a state to lead the moral and intellectual life in which he will be free to pursue perfection.

It should be understood that neither Pope Leo nor Maritain had in mind here only a State whose subjects are Christians. Their principles were intended to apply to the State *qua* State.

It should also be understood that the Catholic viewpoint does not exclude the tolerance of evil on the part of the civil government. In the same encyclical cited above, Pope Leo pointed out that the Catholic Church "does not forbid public authority to tolerate what is at variance with truth and justice, for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, or of obtaining or preserving some greater good." But the Church does this, the Pope made it clear, "while not conceding any right to anything save what is true and honest." There is a vast difference between permitting evil and granting or guaranteeing the right to do evil.

Now the statement of the thirty-nine non-Catholic ministers must be accepted on the basis of the terminology which they used. They said that the Constitution guarantees citizens of this country the right to view a bad motion picture. Whether it be sacrilegious or a film which by its nature incites to lust, the word "bad" was certainly meant to include at least the possibility of violating the moral law. They did not say that the Constitution permits citizens to do this but that it guarantees them the right to do it.

This is a fallacy both of fact and of notion—of fact because the Constitution does not have such a provision even by implication; of notion because the civil law cannot guarantee anyone the right to violate the moral law.

(REV.) RAYMOND P. ETTELDORF.

FATHER ETTELDORF, it seems, consistently misses the meaning intended by the thirty-nine ministers. We do not think they were saying that the Constitution guarantees anyone the moral right to do what is evil. That, of course, is a right that simply does not exist, and in any case the only rights conferred by the Constitution are legal rights, derived from the notion of man as a responsible, free agent, capable of free decision—even of choosing evil over good.

In the ministers' statement the words "the right of a person *to decide for himself*" seem to be the operative phrase. That, generally speaking, is the right the Constitution guarantees. For instance, Christians were civilly free to make and see "The King of Kings," though many Jewish citizens may have considered the film blasphemous. Protestants were civilly free to write and produce "Family Portrait," though Catholics found its treatment of the Blessed Virgin sacrilegious. Almost daily the printing presses turn out books which Catholics find immoral, sacrilegious, or both. Catholics would deny any moral right to write, buy or sell such books; yet most of us would defend the citizen's legal right to do so without being molested. And we would demand that this right be protected.

The ministers' statement, as quoted by Father Etteldorf, is, of course, far too sweeping as it stands, since it leaves no consideration for the legal demands made by the common good and public decency. But that the power of the state should not be used to enforce the particular moral code or interpretation of any minority, we would have to agree. And that the Constitution guarantees the individual citizen the right not to be so coerced, we would agree with also.

As Catholics, almost every day we see the civil law protecting the individual who breaks this or that canon of the moral law from being interfered with. But we

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would not join in any attempts on the part of the State to stop these individuals, unless there were involved clear and immediate dangers to the common good or a definite assault on public decency. Naturally, we do not believe that men ever have a right to be immoral, blasphemous, sacrilegious or even wrong. But we do believe that they are often legally free to be so in the United States. And the civil liberty which ensures one man's right to do or think wrong without being interfered with, remember, likewise protects another man's freedom to serve the good and the true. We cherish this liberty, however much we may regret its abuse. In the long run, we think, it strengthens rather than weakens the religious position. And the vast majority of American Catholics, despite Mr. Blanshard, are with us there, we suspect.

THE EDITORS.

Of Note

Christianity and the West

THE second issue of *Cross Currents* (Box 189, New York 27, N. Y.), a quarterly review dedicated to "exploring the implications of Christianity for our times," appeared with articles by Jean Daniélou, Romano Guardini, Martin Buber, Max Picard and others. The following is an excerpt from "The Church Between East and West," by Karl Barth, renowned Protestant theologian.

> It is certainly merely a Western opinion, and by no means simply on that account a Christian opinion, that the political attitude which it is incumbent on the Church to take up today should consist in a choice between the two opposing and quarrelling world systems. Money or your life! Clearly defined words! Clear decision! Open partisanship! Such are the cries that go up today from every street in the West, and it is taken for granted which party it is intended the Church should support. How the Amsterdam Church Conference was criticized for not coming to the clear-cut partisan decision on this issue that was expected of it! Curiously enough, the West has not always cried thus to the Church. In other cases it has not always showed the same interest in being confronted by the Church with a clear-cut Either-Or. The same West has, in fact, blamed us, either in certain or uncertain language, for taking sides, when we regarded it as our duty to do so, and has spared no effort in reminding us that the Church should stand above all conflicts and Parties. Why this eagerness today? We are not going to pursue the question, but simply want, first of all, to state quite clearly that the Church is *not* identical with the West, that the Western conscience and judgment is not necessarily the Christian judgment. Just as the Christian judgment and the Christian conscience are not necessarily the Eastern conscience and judgment either.
>
> That is precisely what they are trying to ram into the Eastern Church today with the same eagerness, that the conscience and judgment of the Eastern Church must be identical with that of the East. And how can we see exactly from this distance whether the Christians in Prague and Budapest would prefer to remain 'firm' rather than tread the path of collaboration? Would *we* be remaining firm, would we not rather already be treading the path of collaboration with the West if we were to succumb to that cry 'Money or your life!'? We have *no* Christian reason to meddle with that at all. We have rather every Christian reason, simply to say quite clearly and decisively: neither Money nor Life!—no partisanship! That is the first element in our Christian political attitude: our refusal to fight one way or the other in this conflict. We are not saying that merely as an edifying truth in the quietness of the study; we are saying it to the West, to all of you: The cause of the West may be our cause because we happen to live in the West, happen to inherit Western traditions, but it is not therefore necessarily God's cause—just as the cause of the East is certainly not God's cause either. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, what we have to say is, first of all: Away with the knives! No more oil on this fire! For, if we simply go on cursing each other until there is nothing left to do but have another war, then nothing will improve in any case, no one will be helped and no problem solved. The only possible way is a third way. Let the Church in the East see to it that she says the same thing there! It is all we have to say, we of the Church in the West.

Criticism of "The Miracle"

FROM the review of "The Miracle" published in *Osservatore Romano,* semi-official Vatican paper:

> Opinions may vary and questions may arise—even serious ones—of a religious nature (not to be diminished by the fact that the woman portrayed is mad and that the author who attributed madness to her is not mad); there may also arise other criticisms concerning the point of view of the picture, which is on such a pretentiously cerebral plane that it reminds one of the early d'Annunzio. Nevertheless, the picture contains passages of undoubted cinematic distinction. . . .
>
> A homage and an experiment then, in large part unsuccessful. Nevertheless, we continue to believe in Rosselini's art and we look forward to his next achievement.

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Thirty Years A-Growing

By ANNE FREMANTLE

AT ONE MOMENT in his youth, Cardinal Newman confessed, he was enormously impressed by some Low Church divine who had written that "the only evidence of life is growth." Whether or not this is a scientific, it certainly is a literary truth. And for the past thirty years Elizabeth Bowen has been growing in a steady and satisfactory fashion, so that now she is one of the greatest—if not the greatest—of living English novelists. To re-issue the first two volumes of her short stories, *Encounters* and *Ann Lee's* in one volume of twenty-five stories (*Early Stories. Elizabeth Bowen. Knopf.* $3.), all written and first published when she was between the ages of twenty and twenty-three, took courage and compassion.

Courage, because she can see the creaks at the joints in them far better than her readers of today and she most candidly points them out; compassion, because being now not only the serenely accomplished mistress of her craft but still the young woman sitting at the top of the suburban house, writing by hand, as "distinctly as was possible for me," and crying aloud, not so much for glory as for affirmation, she suffers with every young author and shares her own sufferings. She describes her own early struggles as a wrestling with an occupation which pleased her (and that made it suspect) but which also slowly killed her (and that made it to be respected).

Reality, for her, was the books she had read, so she had engaged "by writing a book myself, to extend the bounds of reality one stage further." And the stage she has taken has been brilliantly illumined for those who follow with all that she herself has garnered of light.

Few women of fifty have achieved so completely dedicated a literary life. There must be, and have been, in Miss Bowen's life housework, queuing, rationing, shortages, moving. There have been two wars, and there has been an abiding house, Bowen's Court, in Ireland, and a late, happy marriage. None of these has been an interruption, nor a divertissement. They are not allowed as excuses for writer's reluctance, nor are they, as they are for most of us, the staring white napkin which wraps for burial our one measly talent. Rather they have all become part of Miss Bowen, part of the nourishment she receives and of the plentiful love whose right ordering is the virtue of her life as of her writing.

On the whole, Miss Bowen finds her own first stories still seem well written: the trouble with some of them is that they were not well found. "But, at twenty-one, where is one to find a story?

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Stories require people, and principally one is interested in oneself." Each time she wrote then, she confesses, she used literature as a device, to place sensations at one remove from herself "at once to exalt and to rationalize them." Many of these early stories are just sketches—in particular, *Breakfast, The Lover, The New House, Human Habitation, Sunday Evening.* In others, there is definitely a situation, and the characters come up to it, take the hurdle easily, or balk completely, or vault heavily. For though it has been emancipated from the plot, the short story, Miss Bowen insists, "must have a psychological turning point." Without it, the sketch becomes "little more than knowing, accomplished, repartee."

Daffodils, an account of school girls' incomprehension of their teacher, has a *déjà vu* feeling, but *The Return* and *Coming Home* have a translucent quality, of a butterfly on a pin, for the moment held, immortalized, fixed. *Lunch* and *Mrs. Windermere* are funny, which is something that rarely happens to Miss Bowen's stories.

In *Ann Lee's,* the stories are, as she says of them, "half-way between the first bright stage of experimentation and the required next degree of command." But their "human inadequacy," she insists, is shown up by their "fair technique." Already she had the power, so triumphantly evident in the later collections of short stories, *Look at All Those Roses* and *Ivy Gripped the Steps* of creating atmosphere. Nothing happens, yet everything emerges, from a few short lines of dialogue, a few brief paragraphs of description. They are drawings which, in a stroke or two, convey a character or a conflict.

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WRITING of Miss Bowen's stories, Gerald Hopkins says, "They have been conceived as living organisms, and are never worked up. The people are real, not because they depend on a quick recording of observed idiosyncrasies, set out nakedly, but because they are perfect symbols of her intuition." For symbols read rather vehicles, and something of Miss Bowen's secret is surprised. Being a woman, she not only creates her characters, she also bears them. The slow maturing, the constant cossetting, give them a well-loved, well rounded and polished look, like favorite conkers shined by a small boy. Miss Bowen's characters give an opposite effect from those, for example, of Aldous Huxley. These, the reader feels, were one and all detested by their creator, who couldn't shove them out of the nest early enough, often before the albumen was even dry on their wings. But even in Miss Bowen's first novel, *To the North,* all our sympathy is with Emmeline, distinguished, sensitive, generous, longing to give herself and to be taken. Yet Markie, her selfish, unfastidious, vulgar lover is never guyed and never excluded. Love me, love all my characters, Miss Bowen seems to insist. In her latest novel the same is true: Stella Rodney, the heroine of *The Heat of the Day,* is very likable, but her traitor lover Robert, the odious Harrison, and Robert's awful family—one of the most toe-blush-making in all fiction—all take their proper share of our sympathy. All that is not love is loss, Miss Bowen knows. Even the blancmange—like Mildred Phelps and the unworthy Humphrey in *The Secession*—are treated fairly and squarely. And how unforgettably Miss Phelps is quick-frozen, as fresh as ever she grew, in one short phrase: "she was a person who came quickly and frothily to the boil, like milk." Just as in the opening paragraph of *The Hotel,* Miss FitzGerald is identified "looking purposelessly up and down in the blind sunlight, and picking at the fingers of her gloves. She was frightened by an interior quietness and by the thought that she had for once in her life stopped thinking and might never begin again."

Of the *Ann Lee's* stories, perhaps *The Visitor, The Parrot* and *Charity* are the most accomplished, maybe because all of them are upon themes as obvious as five-finger exercises: the child sent from home while its mother dies, the girl's first glimpse of adult life, the gangling adolescents half-way between schoolroom and hair-up. As the reader laughs, he also aches to know how it is done, and tries to analyze pigment and sentence, adjective and palette, but the gauche or giggling characters escape scalpel or microscope. Perhaps Maria in *The Cat Jumps* is the quintessence of all Miss Bowen's young people—so delightfully odious.

★

MISS Bowen explains that the writing of the *Ann Lee's* stories was overcast with the idea "that I ought to be attempting a novel." She seems to have gone through the same anxieties on this score, and at approximately the same age, and at the same stage of her development, as Edith Wharton. Both feared they might stick in the short story, out of "sheer timidity or worse, inelastic stupidness" and that, were this to happen, their talents might die on them. The only evidence of life is growth! Miss Bowen, like Miss Wharton, grew into a novelist, and a novelist of the first water. In her first novel, she crowds her canvas—so many characters, and we know so much about them, that we don't care if some get forgotten or lost. But by the time she wrote *To the North* the reader cannot bear to let them out of his sight, their presence continually intrigues and whets his appetite for more.

Of the influences that moulded her style, Miss Bowen herself pays tribute to Katherine Mansfield and E. M. Forster, and in these *Early Stories* both are still somewhat undigested—especially Katherine Mansfield in *The Confidante, The Shadowy Third* and *Making Arrangements,* and E. M. Forster in *Requiescat, The Contessina, The Secession* and *The Storm.* But so good are the latter, they actually increase our debt to Mr. Forster, while acquitting Miss Bowen of hers. By the time Elizabeth Bowen began *The Hotel,* she was already master of her own style; she had come through her influences and had integrated them. Thereafter her style, like amber, holds in lasting suspension the "only now," which is the moment of literature, as of art.

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Books

The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Edited by Malcolm Cowley. Scribners. $3.75.

ALTOGETHER, Scott Fitzgerald wrote about 160 short stories. Some of them, like "May Day" and "The Rich Boy" (both in this collection), were almost novelettes, and quite a few others were not much more than glorified anecdotes. The short story might well have been Fitzgerald's chief interest. He was never very adept at plotting a complex work, or even at handling the same characters for long without changing them. *Tender Is the Night,* his longest and most mature novel, is certainly one of the most chaotically organized books ever written by a novelist of stature—and it was published only after he had spent years trying to put it in coherent shape. Nevertheless, he always regarded the novel as his métier and the short story chiefly as an instrument for paying off his perpetual debts. Mr. Cowley notes in his introduction that Fitzgerald had no compunctions even about looting the best of his short stories for passages to incorporate in his novels.

There are twenty-eight stories in this collection, and the only critical appraisal that can be made of them as a whole is that they range from the very good to the very inconsequential. Unfortunately, the best stories are those which the reader is most likely to have read already. The only other Fitzgerald collection published in recent years was the Viking Portable edition, which included nine short stories. Seven of those nine are included in Mr. Cowley's twenty-eight, and I trust it will not be thought perverse of me to suggest that the other two—"The Offshore Pirate" and "The Cut-Glass Bowl"—should have been in this volume as well.

However, there is certainly a virtue in publishing as many unavailable stories as possible, and twenty-one of these have been out of print for years. I suspect that their appearance together in one volume may force some drastic revisions in the Fitzgerald legend. At his best, Fitzgerald was an immensely suggestive writer, a wizard with the language, and—a point that is usually overlooked—a fine humorist. But most of the time, he was not even approximately at his best; he was broke and in debt and forced to knock out quickly the dreary, imitative *Saturday Evening Post* fiction that came to be his chief support financially. There was, usually, something that made even these efforts stand out from other slick-magazine fiction—a deftness with words, a sudden flight of hilarious fancy, an ability to sum up a character in a few sharp words, as in his introduction of "Warren McIntyre, who casually attended Yale. . . ." But the over-all impression you get from these stories, which are supposed to have been his best, is that their author was not trying too hard most of the time.

FITZGERALD'S real limitation was not merely a matter of circumstance, however. Ultimately, his problem was a personality problem that made him unable to write about anything except the failures of weaklings. Except for a few pieces about flappers, these stories have only one theme—failure. His heroes fail to get the girl, or the job, or the inheritance, or the recognition, or whatever salvation it is they are seeking. Usually, they are talented and attractive young men—he was always writing about himself, of course—and their frustrations are sometimes rather hard to account for realistically.

In "'The Sensible Thing,'" for example, young George O'Kelly is unable to marry a beautiful Southern belle because he is only a forty-dollar-a-week insurance clerk. They finally decide, in an exquisitely moving scene, to do the sensible thing, to break off their engagement. A year later, George returns to the girl's town. He has just made a huge success as an engineer in Peru, and his professional prospects are now excellent. She is as beautiful as he remembered her and still unmarried. But instead of arranging an immediate marriage, Fitzgerald's hero is suddenly stricken with disillusionment. Something is missing. The story ends on this note: "Well, let it pass, he thought; April is over, April is over. There are all kinds of love in the world, but never the same love twice."

This ingrained fear of success may possibly have had its roots in Fitzgerald's attitude toward his father, whom he admired enormously but whom he regarded as a hopeless failure. The origin of the drive, however, is less important than its effect on his stories. These invariably fall short of real tragedy. Fitzgerald's sad young men lack the stature of tragic figures; they are too weak, too self-pitying, too masochistic. They were always romantic egotists, and if they had achieved success, you can only assume, their achievement would have meant to them chiefly a chance at greater prestige and self-indulgence.

With all this, it still remains to be said that Mr. Cowley's collection has some wonderful reading in it; there is no good reason why Scribners should not issue two or three further volumes of stories. I would hope that any subsequent collections tell the reader which magazines the stories originally appeared in. Mr. Cowley has told us only which previous collections the stories were taken from — information which seems to me largely irrelevant. If we knew the magazines, it might help us to decide further how much Fitzgerald's literary taste and standards were affected by the markets he was forced to aim at.

DANIEL SELIGMAN.

Horace Greeley. William Harlan Hale. Harper. $4.

HORACE Greeley is one of the most notable of the half-for-

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gotten American great who are remembered for the wrong thing. If his name rings any bell today, it evokes the echo: "Go West, young man," which is not what he said but what he thought. It has been almost wholly forgotten that he had an influential finger in almost every intellectual and political pie in those lively mid-nineteenth century decades which, thanks to Van Wyck Brooks, Carl Sandburg, and a host of others, have been brought alive for us by the great re-examination of our past in recent years.

William Harlan Hale has seen Greeley's significance as an independent searching mind who was one of our first great modern editors, a keeper of the public conscience, and the only professional American liberal who made liberalism pay in terms of mass circulation. He converted thousands to Fourierism, labor unions, free homesteads, vegetarianism, and spiritualism, and exercised an extraordinary influence on Lincoln. He was probably the last great publisher to have a chance to be President. The bright young men he chose went on to play notable roles in the great remaking of America after the Civil War. And, as if all this were not enough, Greeley was "one of the few men ever to adore Margaret Fuller, and certainly the only known Republican to have employed Karl Marx."

Hale has made the most of this rich career, and in effect written the history of the era by setting Greeley against a broad background. This book is popular history, but popular history written with a decent respect for the fact and for scholarship, and with acknowledgment for its sources. If sometimes the book comes unpleasantly close to the Luce school of history, with its distorted values, it is nonetheless the ablest, richest, and best written life of one of the most interesting Americans.

MASON WADE.

New China: Three Views. Otto B. van der Sprenkel, Robert Guillain, and Michael Lindsay. Edited by Otto B. van der Sprenkel, with an introduction by Kingsley Martin. John Day. $3.

HONEST and intelligent books on Communist China are all too rare, but fortunately one has recently been added to the list. It is the work of two Englishmen and a Frenchman—Professor Otto van der Sprenkel of the University of London; Michael Lindsay, a scholar who lived and worked with the Chinese Communists during their war against Japan; and Robert Guillain, a distinguished French journalist. Each has written one part of the book, and a fourth, consisting of documents, has been appended by the editor, Professor van der Sprenkel.

In the first part the editor himself describes with considerable sympathy the policies and attitudes of the Chinese Communists toward the economic problems which confront them, toward foreigners in China, and toward the Soviet Union, as well as the popular support which these policies have won for them. His opportunities for observation, unfortunately, were limited to the vicinity of Peking and Tientsin. He believes that the Communists can if necessary industrialize China without external aid, but advances no very convincing arguments in support of his view. His description (pp. 26-27) of the favorable prospects of Christian missions needs to be modified in the light of recent reports, which speak of the departure of many American Protestant missionaries and the fostering by the Communists of a schismatic movement among Chinese Catholics.

M. Guillain, who watched the Communists in action at Shanghai, is the least favorable of the three toward the new regime. He admits its strength, accomplishments, and present popularity, but stresses its repressive aspects and the economic difficulties which it faces.

Mr. Lindsay's approach, as might be expected in view of his long association with the Chinese Communists, is basically sympathetic, but he concedes that their ideas about the outside world, especially the United States, are fantastic, and he fears that doctrinaire Marxism may prevail in party counsels over the pragmatic methods which have been the making of Mao Tse-tung.

The fourth part of the book consists of documents selected by Professor van der Sprenkel, among them the constitution of the People's Republic of China and the published text of the Sino-Soviet treaty of February 14, 1950.

All three of the authors agree with Kingsley Martin, who has contributed a harangue in favor of Soviet, and against American, Far Eastern policy by way of introduction, that the Western world must try to understand the new China and live at peace with it. This is certainly a defensible view, but China's active intervention in the Korean war, which began after the book was written, emphasizes the difficulty of its realization and illustrates the truth of the principle that genuine peace is possible only if there is goodwill on both sides.

The aptest comment on the internal policies of the Chinese Communists which I have heard was made by a Chinese student and told to me by an American medical missionary. "This is a strong medicine," said the student, "medicine that we needed desperately. But is it a food?"

HAROLD C. HINTON.

François de Fénelon. Katherine Day Little. Harper. $3.50.

DOWN through the ages, as Newman used to point out, there are some names which light up fires in the human heart. Sometimes it is a mere half line which calls up the memory of a great man and, for a few magic moments, creates a certain sense of nostalgia: a warm remembrance of things past.

In this gallant company, the name of François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon is forever secure and forever honored. He has had his share of biographers and interpreters in many languages. Unfortunately, most of the works in English are now out of print and it is accordingly a pleasure to welcome a new commentary by

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Katherine Day Little. It is sensitive, balanced, and penetrating.

Mrs. Little's book is not a vast project like the biography published by Longmans soon after the turn of the century. Nor is it as sharply etched as the excellent study by J. Lewis May which was published by Burns, Oates and Washburne in London some fifteen years ago. But it has perspective and it has depth. It also has restraint. The period, the man and the conflicting ideas of the period are brought to life with the steady hand of a sure artist. There is generous translation of a wide variety of source materials and these materials are allowed to speak for themselves.

Mrs. Little is primarily concerned with Fénelon, the director of souls, the sensitive guide whose own quest for God has a special meaning for the puzzled pilgrims of our own time. She is not so much concerned with Fénelon, the realist, the Archbishop who nearly averted the French Revolution; the man who tried to do something about the time in which he lived; the man who tried to change the history of France by changing the mind and the heart of one child, the Dauphin.

And yet—who can say that Fénelon is exclusively this or that? He is, like so many of the saints, many things to many men. Oddly enough, however, it is usually Americans who catalogue him with the metaphysicians. At least it seemed so, in the spring of 1939, when this reviewer began making a few inquiries in Paris preparatory to work on a play about Fénelon. "Oh, you mean the mystic?" the Americans would inevitably inquire. But the French reply was something else. With them it was invariably: "Oh, you mean the republican?"

Mystic or republican, the whole man is here—the man who defended Mme. Guyon and the man who, in later years, was so well regarded by Rousseau; the man who was denounced by Bossuet and the man who was admired by Pope Clement XI. One could wish, in passing, that a little more attention could have been given to Bossuet's nephew, the Abbé Bosquet, and to the part which he played in the devious attacks upon Fénelon's honor. It is a chapter in history which should not be forgotten.

Mrs. Little deserves a special word of appreciation for translating a letter, to the Duc d'Orleans, which is not found in most collections. It is worth repeating here: "We come into this world all of a sudden, as fallen from the skies; we neither know what we are, nor whence we came, nor whither we are come, nor with whom we live, nor where we shall go upon our departure from here. . . . Nobody cares to unravel the mystery, we amuse ourselves with everything. We want to know all things but the only one which above all things concerns us. This monstrous laziness is the sin of unbelief. . . . Men take it for granted that God is because they dare not examine themselves. An indifference that grows out of their passions for other objects possesses them. They know God as something mysterious,

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unintelligible and far removed, a powerful, austere being. . . . All that a real philosopher needs, beyond a due conviction of his ignorance, is anxiety to discover what he is, and astonishment that, as yet, he does not know it."

Could there be a better lesson for the day in which we live? It is good to be reminded by M. de Cambrai that, even if we can't change the world, there is time to change ourselves.

EMMET LAVERY.

The Holy Bible. Edited by Reverend John P. O'Connell, with illustrations by James J. J. Tissot. The Catholic Press, Inc. (Chicago, Ill.) $25.00.

A NEW Catholic family Bible. The Old Testament is found in the Douay-Challoner; the New Testament and Psalms, in the Confraternity text. Father O'Connell has included Benedict XV's Encyclical on St. Jerome, Pope Leo XIII's on the study of Holy Scripture, and Pius XII's on the promotion of Biblical studies. He has also provided a bibliography of recent papal documents on the Scriptures. A certain number of Biblical maps and a simplified Biblical history have been added. A general Catholic Dictionary supplements the volume, as well as short illustrated treatises on the Mass, the Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary. This edition is generously illustrated by the French artist, Tissot, whose work is in the lushly detailed, uninspiring tradition that American Catholics have long associated with pictorial representations of the Life of Christ. It was not a very striking choice to make for a 1951 edition of the Bible. The typography, however, is excellent.

In a prefatory note called "Facts About the Catholic Bible," Father Connell quotes from a statement made by the archbishops and bishops of the United States in 1884:

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• REVIEWERS •

DANIEL SELIGMAN is an associate editor of *Fortune*.

MASON WADE is an historian, author of *The Journals of Francis Parkman* and other books.

HAROLD C. HINTON is a member of the History Department of Georgetown University.

EMMET LAVERY is a playwright and screen writer, author of *The First Legion, Magnificent Yankee* and other Broadway and Hollywood successes.

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A Point of View II

The Time Is Ripe

THE Communists have been ruthless, shrewd, double-dealing and double-talking. But, ironically enough, their greatest triumphs have been built on the failures of Christians. In a world where Christians have been numerous and well-organized, Communism, not Christianity, has voiced the indignation of millions. In a world full of inequalities and injustices, Communism, not Christianity, has been the revolutionary, radical thing. Only the Communists, who understand what danger a dynamic Christianity could be to their own inhumanity, fear Christianity. The overfed can take it or leave it alone. In workaday life, they have found, Christianity can be ignored altogether; when it suits the purpose, the Sermon on the Mount can be reduced to a banquet-speech platitude.

It would still be another setback if what little Christian social dedication and action there are were to lag, now that the Communists and fellow-travelers in this country are on the run. It would be tragic if Communism had become so identified with the spirit of social protest, and Christianity so identified with the status quo, with all its evils, that Christians who carried on were suspect, considered discredited. Never has the time been riper for Christian social action.

Editorial in The Commonweal, December 22, 1950

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